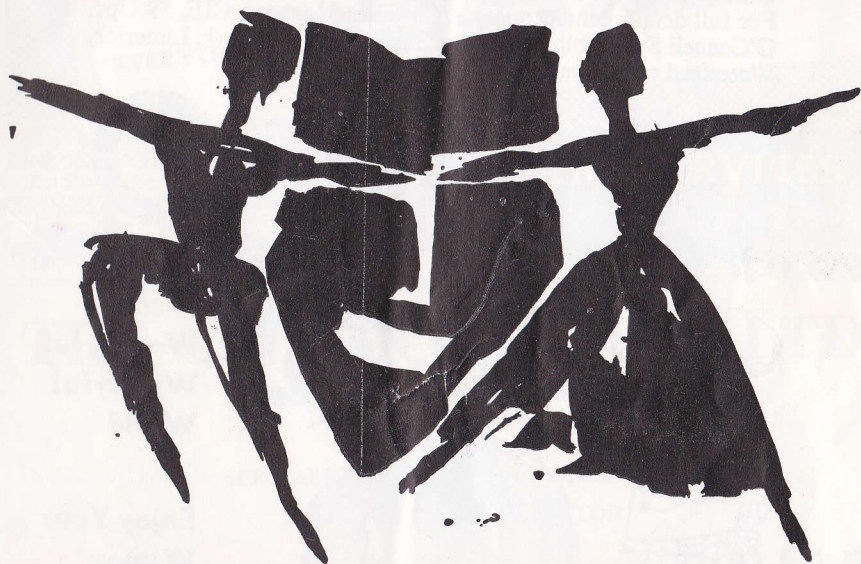


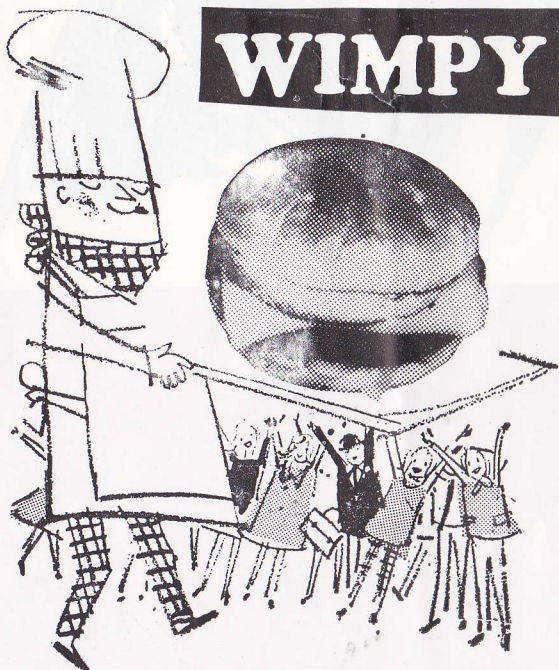
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Monday, 3rd May Wednesday, 5th May Friday, 7th May 8.00 p.m.

CORK OPERA HOUSE

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present

AIDA

by GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

Libretto by Ghislanzoni

(by arrangement with G. Ricordi & Co. [London] Ltd.)

Aïda (daughter of Amonasro and slave
of Amneris) MILKANA NIKOLOVA

Amneris (daughter of the King of Egypt) CAROL WYATT

Ramphis (the High Priest) CARLO MICALUCCI

Radames (Captain of the Guard) RENATO FRANCESCONI

Amonasro (King of Ethiopia) PEDRO FARRES

King of Egypt EFTIMIOS MICHALOPOULOS

Messenger PATRICK RING

Priestess MONICA CONDRON

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Pauline McDermott, Vanessa O'Donnell, Mary O'Sullivan, Jack Bloomfield,
Paul Fitzsimons, Patrick Murphy (Choreographer — Sylvia Behan)

T H A N K S

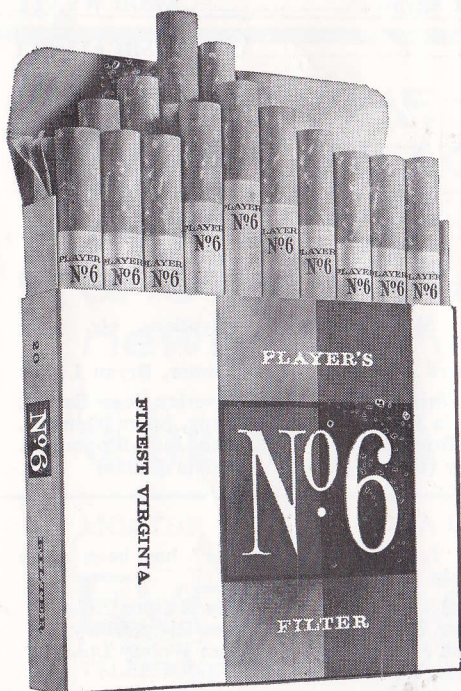
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ACT

Scene 1 A hall in the Pa
Scene 2 The Temple of V

ACT

Scene 1 The apartment of
Scene 2 The gates of the

ACT T

The banks o

ACT F

Scene 1 A hall in the Pa
Scene 2 The Temple of V

Aida was first performed on December

Conductor — NAPOLE

RADIO-TELEFIS EIREANN
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Vulcan at Memphis

TWO

Amneris in the Palace at Thebes
city of Thebes

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f the Nile

FOUR

place at Memphis
Vulcan

24th, 1871, at the Opera House, Cairo

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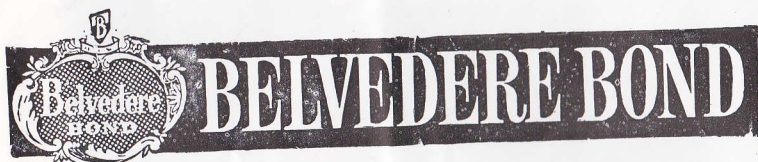


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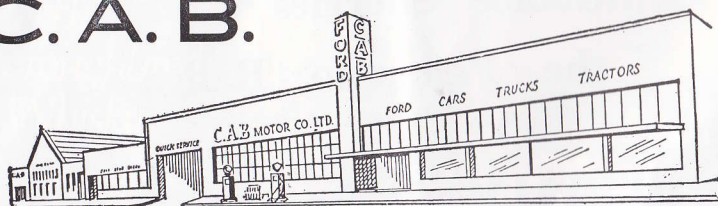
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“AIDA”

(Giuseppe Verdi)

THE STORY OF THE OPERA

AIDA was commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt for the Opera House, Cairo, where it was first performed on December 24th, 1871. The composer was then in his late fifties. “Aida” was to be followed after long intervals by “Otello” and “Falstaff.” These three belong to Verdi’s greatest period and represent the full maturity of his genius and experience. The ‘scenario’ for “Aida” and the authentic local colour were furnished by the French Egyptologist, Mariette Bey. Verdi and Camille du Locle together worked on the original libretto, which was in French. The final version in Italian was produced by Antonio Ghislanzoni.

ACT ONE

After the brief subdued prelude a hall in the palace of Memphis is disclosed. Radames (tenor), Captain of the Guard, is told by Ramphis (Bass), High Priest of Egypt, of the rumoured invasion by the Ethiopians of the sacred soil of Egypt and that the oracle of Isis has already named the Egyptian Commander. Radames, in the aria, ‘Celeste Aida,’ wishes that he might be chosen warrior so that by his victories he might win Aida and free her from slavery. It is unknown in Egypt that Aida, favourite slave of Amneris, is the captive daughter of the Ethiopian King, Amonasro. Amneris (mezzo-soprano), daughter of the King of Egypt, enters, soon followed by Aida (soprano). Amneris is tormented in her secret love for Radames by suspicions that he, instead, is in love with Aida — suspicions which are strengthened by the glances she sees exchanged between the two. Masking her anger, Amneris affects sympathy and friendship for Aida. News of the invasion (led by Amonasro) is confirmed by a Messenger (tenor). The King (bass) proclaims Radames to be the chosen leader. To the strains of a solemn march all repair to the Temple for Radames’s investiture. Aida, alone, re-echoes the cry ‘Ritorna Vincitor’ (Return victorious) and her succeeding aria is the distraught expression of the conflict within her — love for Radames, the Egyptian, warring with the love for her father, brothers, and fellow countrymen who will be his opponents in the coming battle.

The scene moves to the Temple of Vulcan where with ceremonial chant and ritual dance Radames is solemnly invested as commander while victory for the Egyptian army is implored of the deity Phtha.

ACT TWO

Victory is to the Egyptians, and Amneris, in her apartment in the palace at Thebes, is being arrayed by her slaves for the ceremonial reception of the triumphant army and its leader. African slave boys dance before her. Only Aida is still unaware of the victory and Amneris decides that the moment has come to probe her heart. Craftily she lies that the Egyptians have been routed and that Radames is dead. From Aida’s despair at this cruel news and her great cry of joy when told of the deception, Amneris learns what she has dreaded to know. In a frenzy of rage and jealousy she taunts the wretched Aida with her servitude. As the slave that she is, Aida shall attend her, Amneris, the daughter of the Pharaohs, when from her throne beside the King she places the laurels of victory on Radames’ brow.

The 'Triumph Scene' that ensues is one of the most spectacular in all opera, engaging the full technical and musical resources of the theatre. At the gates of Thebes Radames and his soldiers are received in splendour. Radames is invited by the King to ask what favour he pleases. He first asks that the captives be brought in. Amongst them is Amonasro (baritone), disguised, who admits only to being an officer and Aida's father. Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, he says, fell in the battle. Radames' petition is that the captives be released. At the demand of Ramphis and the priests, however, Amonasro and Aida are held as hostages to peace. Finally, on the saviour of his country the King bestows the hand of Amneris — together one day they shall rule Egypt. With Amneris exulting over her unhappy rival and with demonstrations of popular joy (Chorus: 'Gloria all' Egitto) the curtain falls.

ACT THREE

A moonlit scene by the banks of the Nile. Amneris passes on her way to spend the vigil of her marriage in the Temple of Isis. Aida steals in to keep a last tryst with Radames before she seeks peace and oblivion beneath the dark waters of the Nile. The aria 'O Patria Mia' is a sad farewell to the fatherland she shall never see again. (Note the nostalgic effect created by oboe, clarinets and bassoon). Amonasro joins her and in their exceedingly dramatic duet unfolds a stratagem of escape, of turning defeat into victory and of restoring Radames to Aida. If she would entice Radames to fly with her and to learn from him which mountain pass the Egyptians will use to march against the resurgent Ethiopians then victory would be assured. Aida recoils from the suggestion but consents at last when Amonasro furiously rejects her: "You are not my daughter, you are the slave of the Egyptians!" Radames, seduced by his passion for Aida, falls into the snare. Unguardedly he names the secret route of the Egyptian forces. At his words "the gorge of Napata" the listening Amonasro reveals both himself and his true status. From the temple Amneris and the High Priest too have overheard. The Guard is alerted. Amonasro and Aida disappear into the darkness. Radames, accused, of treason, surrenders his sword to the High Priest.

ACT FOUR

In a sombre hall of the palace Amneris awaits the passage of Radames to trial for high treason. This scene is dominated by Amneris. Agonised by remorse for the destruction her jealous rage has brought on Radames she implores him to defend himself at the trial and in return for his love she will contrive his pardon. But Radames believes Aida to be dead and would welcome death himself to expiate his crime. It makes no difference that Amneris admits Aida to be still alive. Silent before the priests, his judges, Radames is sentenced to be buried alive. Vainly Amneris rages against the priests (*Empia razza*) and the close of the scene leaves her alone and desolate. (The music of this episode is highly charged with emotion and the scene demands great singing from the mezzo-soprano).

The last scene is a divided one. Above is the Temple of Vulcan; below the dark airless tomb where Radames has been enclosed. From the shades behind him a form emerges — Aida, who has concealed herself there in order to die along with him. Together they sing their ecstatic farewell to earth in the duet 'O terra addio' which fades upon the muted ethereal strings of the orchestra and the broken words of Amneris praying that Isis may grant peace to her beloved.